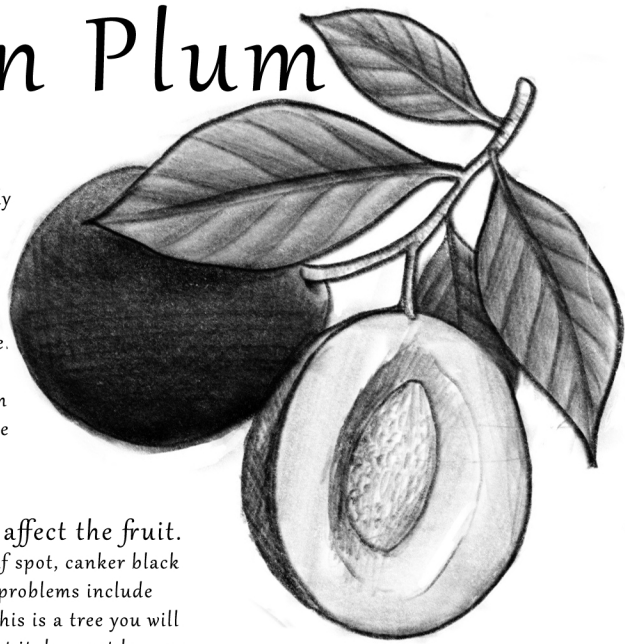


American Plum

As a tree, the American Plum typically grows to 15-25' tall with a broad, spreading crown. As a shrub, it suckers freely and can form large colonies. White flowers appear in March before the foliage. Flowers are unpleasantly aromatic. Flowers are followed by edible, round, red plums (1" diameter) with bright yellow pulp which ripen in early summer. Toothed, oblong to ovate leaves are 3-4" long and turn yellow to red in autumn. Branches and twigs are an attractive dark reddish-brown and sometimes have thorny lateral branchlets.



Plum curculio and brown rot can affect the fruit. Other potential disease problems include leaf spot, canker black knot, and gummosis. Other potential insect problems include aphids, scale, borers and tent caterpillars. This is a tree you will have to visit with frequently to make sure that it does not become terribly infected with a fungus, but if given attention the problems are quick to manage. Many plums require cross-pollination to produce fruit, although there are some varieties that can produce fruit on their own; would cross pollinate with the choke-cherry or other plums.

Planting: Plant plum trees in well-drained, moderately fertile soil in full sun. Avoid planting in low areas where frost may settle, as the frost will damage your trees. If possible, find a sheltered position, such as a south- or west-facing spot out of the wind. This will help the plum tree set fruit. Dig a hole that is a few inches deeper and wider than the spread of the roots. American plum can tolerate a wide range of soil types from sandy soils to poorly drained soils. Flowering occurs from March-May and fruit ripens from August to September. The plant has fruit every year and branches can be pruned or cut back to increase production.

Harvest and Uses: This species is not a hybrid and as such we're unaccustomed to the quality of the fruit. The fruits, therefore, are usually used for preserves and jellies-- try them dehydrated as drying sweetens fruits. In the future, grafting a hybrid species to the Americana Plum can increase production and offer many varieties of plum. Plums have the best flavor when left to ripen on the tree. You can tell when plums are ripe by applying gentle pressure with your fingers. If the skin of the fruit feels soft, then it is ready to be picked. Plums are highly rich in vitamins and minerals, and they are also hydrating.

Minimum Spacing: 8' min

Height: 15'

Spread: 15'

Light: prefers full sun

Shade: tolerates light shade (up to 50%)

Moisture: medium

PH: 6.1-7

Pollination & Propagation: somewhat self fertile but prefers other fruit trees for max pollination; recommended to consider hybrid grafting once established; propagates by sending up shoots

Harvest begins at: 2-6 yrs

Interesting Growing Considerations: plums have short lives, but with coppicing one can continue the growth from the rootstock already established.